

# Ten ways to keep yourself out of trouble

By Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Breton  
Hickam Area Defense Council

In almost 15 years of service, I have pondered this subject more times than I can count. It seems logical: don't do things that you know you're not supposed to do, right? It's not always that simple.

Before I delve into the dark corners of 'legalese,' let me preface this by telling you a little about the Area Defense Counsel's office. My boss, who is a defense attorney, represents and advises any active-duty Airman who has any adverse action pending against him or her. This includes letters of counseling or reprimand, unfavorable information files or control roster actions, Article 15 actions, administrative discharge actions and court-martial proceedings.

Which brings me to why I'm enlightening you with my wealth of knowledge. Every day, I see people whose one-time small mistake is now putting them in the unflattering spotlight of their commander's vision and jeopardizing their careers.

How many of you out there reading this knew any statement you make can be used against you? You're all saying, "Duh." But do you realize that doesn't just apply to written statements you make on an Air Force Form 1168 – it also means verbal, written and e-mailed statements you make to your spouse, co-workers, roommates, supervisors,

or any link of your chain of command? Not to mention any statements you make to security forces, Air Force Office of Special Investigation, or civilian police.

Article 31 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice states, "no person subject to the UCMJ may compel any person to incriminate himself or to answer any question the answer to which may tend to incriminate him. No person may interrogate, or request any statement from an accused or a person suspected of an offense without first informing him of the nature of the accusation and advising him that he does not have to make any statement regarding the offense of which he is accused or suspected and any statement made by him may be used as evidence against him in a trial by court-martial." Layman's terms: a) you cannot be forced to make any statements that may be self-incriminating, b) they have to tell you what you are being "charged" with, and c) you've been advised making a statement can be used against you.

We've all been told since basic training that being cooperative is in our best interest. Here's a little known fact; investigators can lawfully engage in trickery when questioning a suspect. Yes, it's lawful and no, there's nothing you can do about it.

It is human nature for us to want to defend ourselves and put our version of events out there. Just remember even innocent people with nothing

### 10 Ways to keep yourself out of trouble:

10. Don't get so inebriated that you're not in control of yourself anymore. You will end up doing something you'll regret later.
9. Don't ever use drugs. Ask yourself if it's worth your career, your GI Bill, and a criminal record that follows you forever.
8. Don't lie. There's no such thing as a "little white lie." Either say nothing at all when questioned, or tell the truth.
7. Live within your means. If you can't afford to pay \$2,000 for rims for your car or hundreds for those Armani Shoes, then you don't need them.
6. Be likeable and valuable. Good troops get breaks because they've earned them.
5. If you want to fight, take a Tae-Bo class. Don't use your fellow service members as punching bags.
4. Always be squared away and 10 minutes early. Your uniform, haircut, military bearing and punctuality really do reflect who you are.
3. Treat everyone with respect.
2. Don't hang out with idiots ... you'll eventually get blamed for what they have done.
1. Always ask for an attorney when read your rights.

to hide have the right and should exercise the right to remain silent and to consult counsel prior to making a statement.

If, after talking to the ADC you still want to make a statement, that's fine. We'll make sure it's the truth with no "prosecutorial spin." While a majority of law enforcement personnel are honest and are doing their job to the best of their ability, there are investigators out there who try to scare Airmen. They say things like, "only guilty people go to the ADC," or "this is your one and only chance to cooperate," or "you have to decide right now." That's not

# Excellence in all we do includes time for self

*Make time for physical, mental, spiritual fitness*

By Master Sgt. David Richard  
341st Security Forces Squadron  
first sergeant

Service before self is probably the hardest of the Air Force core values to define. However, it doesn't mean service in spite of self.

How can someone emphasize service before self too much? Here are few examples: coming to work on a wing family day to do routine work that could wait; always volunteering to be the point of contact for a tasking when there are others willing and able to perform the required tasks; or allowing yourself to

lose leave at the end of the year.

When we over-emphasize service before self, in spite of our self, we hinder another core value, excellence in all we do.

Each one of us, Air Force leaders and members, have a responsibility to ensure our people do the right things to take care of themselves. When the wing has a family day, make it a point to ensure you and your people spend time with family and friends.

Leaders have a responsibility for the development of the people under them. If we consistently volunteer to be the point of contact for projects, we run the risk of not developing the people under us. Give others the opportunity to volunteer.

Make it a priority for you and your people to take leave each year. Air Force officials believe strongly in the impor-

tance of having Airmen use their leave throughout the year so they can relax and re-energize. Why do you think they give you 30-days of leave each year? You've earned them, don't lose them.

The Air Force demands your best each day. If you are not doing the things you need to take care of yourself, the mission will suffer. Our people, by nature, are driven and are going to put the mission before themselves. Sometimes they may need a nudge to take care of themselves also.

Here are a couple of things you can resolve to do this new year. Make time for physical, mental and spiritual fitness and take time to enjoy your family and friends. If you do these things, you will have service before self and won't be doing service in spite of self.

# Hickam Voices

What is your new year's resolution?



"I'm going to dedicate my time to studying to make staff sergeant."

**Senior Airman Tanya Ruiz**  
15th Operations Support Squadron



"I want to continue to work on providing the best financial services possible."

**Staff Sgt. Leroy Lobitos**  
15th Comptroller Squadron



"I decided years ago to no longer make new year's resolutions – so far, so good."

**Capt. Heidi Potter**  
Pacific Air Forces



"I want to minimize my debt and also become a more organized person."

**Warren Oda**  
15th Communications Squadron



"I want to eat better and exercise more."

**Denise Kessler**  
Spouse of Master Sgt. Brian Kessler  
15th Airlift Wing

Next week's question:  
**What is your favorite thing to do on a Sunday afternoon?**

To respond to this question, send an email to [hickam.kukini@hickam.af.mil](mailto:hickam.kukini@hickam.af.mil) with a response and phone number to contact you.

# Action Line



**Col. Ray Torres**  
15th Airlift Wing commander

The purpose of the Action Line is in its name it's your direct link to me so we can work as a team to make Hickam a better community. It also allows you to recognize individuals who go "above and beyond" in their duties – and we all know there are plenty of those folks here. All members of Team Hickam are welcome to use the Action Line, however, I urge you to give the normal chain of command the first chance at resolving problems or issues. It's only fair to give our commanders and managers the first opportunity to work issues under their responsibility. If you have done this and are still not satisfied, give my commander's Action Line a call. If you want me to get back to you, leave your name and number, state your issue, tell me who you have talked to and why you were not satisfied with their response. I'll work your issue and

respond verbally or in writing. The Action Line number is 449-2996. Messages may also be sent by e-mail to [15aw.pal@hickam.af.mil](mailto:15aw.pal@hickam.af.mil).

## Grass Mowing Question

**Comment:** As I was mowing the grass today, I noticed that some of the vacant housing had not been mowed in weeks. From the E-mail that each active-duty member received from 15th Civil Engineer Squadron, I was under the impression a contractor would mow the vacant house's front, back and side yard. I understand they are not responsible for the common area, carports, and the curb. I know money is sometimes short when it comes time to fund and pay for the contractor, but shouldn't it be a priority?

Fox Boulevard is always nicely manicured. Why can't the streets we actually live on be

just as nice? Every weekend I make sure our yard is ready for our weekly inspection on Tuesday or Wednesday. I take great pride in making our small piece of the neighborhood look presentable. How can we be held to certain standards if these yards are not taken care of weekly as well?

**Response:** Base beautification is high on the housing priority list. There is a contractor assigned to mow the grass for vacant units on an as-needed basis. Unfortunately, due to the recent rains and a change in contractors, timely mowing has been rather difficult. Coordination challenges between the base housing office and the contractor during the transition to the new contract have been overcome. In the weeks to come you should see a noticeable difference. Thank you for your comments and community spirit.

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Life Skills Support Center  
449-0175  
Law Enforcement Desk  
449-6373  
Base Chaplain  
449-1754  
Military Family Abuse Shelter  
533-7125